

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim ~~644~~, wherein ~~the said at least one distribution management server~~ further includes:

a distribution method determination rule holding unit operable to hold a distribution method determination rule ~~indicating a rule to determine the distribution method~~, the distribution method determination rule indicating a rule to determine whether the usage control data of the content is distributed by the multicast distribution method or the unicast distribution method according to whether or not the number of reproduction times of the content is limited; and

a distribution method determination unit operable to determine the distribution method ~~according to the distribution method determination rule~~, with reference to the distribution method determination rule corresponding to ~~the attributes~~ an attribute of ~~said each the~~ content,

wherein said usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data according to the distribution method determined by said distribution method determination unit.

8. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 7, further comprising a content server for distributing contents to ~~the said~~ client apparatus, wherein ~~the said at least one~~ distribution management server further includes:

a method information generation unit operable to generate information indicating the determined distribution method; and

a method information sending unit operable to send the generated information indicating the distribution method to ~~the said~~ content server by associating ~~said the generated~~ information with the contents to be distributed,

wherein ~~the said~~ content server distributes the contents including the information indicating the distribution method.

9. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 8, wherein ~~the said~~ client apparatus includes:

a content obtainment unit operable to obtain a content from ~~the~~said content server;
a distribution method identification unit operable to extract the information indicating the distribution method from the obtained content and identify the distribution method for the usage control data corresponding to the content based on the extracted information; and
a usage control data obtainment unit operable to obtain the usage control data from ~~one of~~ said distribution ~~servers~~server according to the identified distribution method.

10. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 9, wherein ~~the~~said usage control data obtainment unit (1) requests ~~the~~said ~~unicast-distribution~~usage control data distribution unit to distribute the usage control data corresponding to the obtained content when the identified distribution method is the unicast distribution method, and (2) waits until ~~the~~a predetermined distribution time at which the usage control data corresponding to the content ~~are~~is distributed when the identified distribution method is the multicast distribution method.

11. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 7, wherein ~~the~~said distribution management server further includes:

a method information generation unit operable to generate information indicating the determined distribution method; and

a method information sending unit operable to send the generated information indicating the distribution method to ~~the~~said client apparatus, and

~~the~~said client apparatus includes:

a method information obtainment unit operable to obtain the information indicating the distribution method from ~~the~~said distribution management server;

a distribution method identification unit operable to identify the distribution method for the usage control data corresponding to ~~said each~~the content based on the information indicating the distribution method; and

a usage control data obtainment unit operable to obtain the usage control data from ~~one of~~ ~~the~~said distribution ~~servers~~server according to the identified distribution method.

12. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 11, wherein ~~the said~~ usage control data obtainment unit (1) requests ~~the said unicast distribution~~ usage control data distribution unit to distribute the usage control data corresponding to obtained content when the identified distribution method is the unicast distribution method, and (2) waits until ~~the a~~ predetermined distribution time at which the usage control data corresponding to the content ~~are~~ distributed when the identified distribution method is the multicast distribution method.

13. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim ~~6~~44, wherein ~~each of the distribution servers~~ said at least one distribution server including ~~the said unicast distribution~~ usage control data distribution unit further includes an authentication unit to authenticate ~~the said~~ client apparatus as an authorized user when ~~the said~~ client apparatus is recognized as a previously registered client apparatus through communication with each client apparatus, and
~~wherein the said unicast~~ usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data only to ~~the said~~ client apparatus recognized as an authorized user.

14. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 13, wherein ~~the said~~ authentication unit authenticates ~~the said~~ client apparatus by a PKI method.

15. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim 13, wherein ~~the said~~ authentication unit authenticates ~~the said~~ client apparatus by a common key ~~method~~ system.

16. (Cancelled)

17. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim ~~4~~44, further comprising a user management server that distributes a predetermined decryption

key only to a previously registered user,

wherein ~~the said at least one~~ distribution ~~management~~ server includes a control data encryption unit operable to encrypt the usage control data determined to be distributed by the multicast distribution method, using a key corresponding to the predetermined decryption key, and

~~wherein the multicast content storage unit stores the multicast content including the encrypted usage control data~~ said usage control data distribution unit distributes the encrypted usage control data.

18. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim ~~16~~44, further comprising a content server which distributes only ~~the~~ content whose usage control data is determined to be distributed by the unicast distribution method,

wherein ~~the said unicast distribution~~ usage control data distribution unit distributes only the usage control data of ~~said each the~~ content to be distributed by ~~the said~~ content server.

19 - 22. (Cancelled)

23. (Currently Amended) The content usage management system according to Claim ~~22~~44, wherein the usage control data further ~~include~~ includes a use condition for using content, and ~~the~~ said client apparatus further includes a reproduction control unit operable to extract the use condition from the obtained usage control data and control ~~the said~~ reproduction unit to perform the reproduction within an extent to which the extracted use condition is satisfied.

24-38. (Cancelled)

39. (Currently Amended) The distribution server according to Claim ~~38~~46, further ~~including~~ comprising a distribution method determination rule holding unit operable to ~~previously~~ hold a distribution method determination rule, ~~indicating a rule to determine the distribution method~~ the distribution method determination rule indicating a rule to determine whether the

usage control data of the content is distributed by the multicast distribution method or the unicast distribution method according to whether or not the number of reproduction times of the content is limited,

wherein ~~the~~ a distribution method determination unit determines the distribution method according to the ~~distribution method determination rule~~, with reference to the distribution method determination rule corresponding to ~~the attributes~~ an attribute of ~~said each~~ the content, and said usage control data distribution unit distributes the usage control data according to the distribution method determined by said distribution method determination unit.

40-43. (Cancelled)

44. (New) A content usage management system comprising:

a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content; and

at least one distribution server, wherein

said client apparatus includes a usage control data receiving unit operable to receive usage control data including a key used for reproduction of the distributed content from said at least one distribution server, and a reproduction unit operable to reproduce the distributed content using the usage control data, and

said at least one distribution server includes a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether the content distributed to said client apparatus is content having a limited number of reproduction times or not, and a usage control data distribution unit operable to

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of reproduction times of the content is not limited.

45. (New) A content usage management method comprising:

confirming, at an at least one distribution server, whether content distributed to a client apparatus that reproduces distributed content, is content having a limited number of reproduction times or not;

(a) distributing, from the at least one distribution server, usage control data including a key used for reproduction of distributed content, by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from the client apparatus, when the number of reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distributing, from the at least one distribution server, the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including the client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to the plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of reproduction times of the content is not limited;

receiving, at the client apparatus, the usage control data from the at least one distribution server; and

reproducing the content at the client apparatus using the usage control data.

46. (New) A distribution server which distributes usage control data to a client apparatus, said distribution server comprising:

a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether content distributed to said client apparatus is content having a limited number of reproduction times or not; and

a usage control data distribution unit operable to

(a) distribute the usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of reproduction times of the content is not limited, wherein the usage control data is data

for controlling usage of content in said client apparatus.

47. (New) A program recorded on a computer-readable recording medium for causing a computer to function at least as:

a confirmation unit operable to confirm whether content distributed to a client apparatus is content having a limited number of reproduction times or not; and

a usage control data distribution unit operable to

(a) distribute usage control data by a unicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed in response to a request from said client apparatus, when the number of reproduction times of the content is limited, and

(b) distribute the usage control data to a plurality of client apparatuses including said client apparatus by a multicast distribution method where the usage control data is distributed to said plurality of client apparatuses simultaneously at a predetermined distribution time, when the number of reproduction times of the content is not limited, wherein the usage control data is data for controlling usage of content in said client apparatus.